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Viewing cable 09RPODUBAI94, IRAN REGIONAL PRESENCE OFFICE - WINDOW ON IRAN - FEBRUARY

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09RPODUBAI94**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09RPODUBAI94	2009-02-24 12:14	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Iran RPO Dubai

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/04/17/112290/state-department-cables-reveal.html>

VZCZCXRO0818
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK
DE RUEHDIR #0094/01 0551214
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O P 241214Z FEB 09
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TO RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE 0286
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RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 RPO DUBAI 000094

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SUBJECT: IRAN REGIONAL PRESENCE OFFICE - WINDOW ON IRAN - FEBRUARY
24, 2009

CLASSIFIED BY: Ramin Asgard, Director, Iran Regional Presence
Office - Dubai, DOS.
REASON: 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

¶1. [S/NF] Russia Reportedly Provides Iran Missile Technology for ICBM: An Iranian businessman with strong links to government/security circles through his status as former IRGC commander in XXXXXXXXXXXX and former senior official for the XXXXXXXXXXXX told IRPO on February 22 that the Russians provided Iranian defense minister Najjar a "kit" for evaluation and construction of a missile with a 7,000 mile range during his visit last week to Moscow. [Note: The two Russian missiles with this range are the SS-25 Sickle and the SS-27 Topol, both three-stage single warhead missiles designed at the Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology and entering into service in 1988 and 1998 respectively. Both can be deployed on mobile launchers.] IRPO Officer asked contact why he thought the Russians would provide Iran with such a dramatically destabilizing technology. He replied that "clearly, the Russians are looking to the US to provide them some major concessions" - purportedly to halt further diplomatic and security support for Iran. Comment: Najjar reportedly wanted to finalize the deal for S-300 air defense missiles during the visit, and this other technology may be a consolation. IRPO is unable to confirm the accuracy of this contact's claims, but is compelled to report this disturbing allegation.

¶2. [S/NF] IRPO Contact Reports on Meeting with Khatami: A well-established IRPO contact with direct access to the reformist camp (both Khatami and Karroubi) provided a detailed readout of his meeting last week with former President Khatami. Highlights follow:

What Supreme Leader Khamenei Told Khatami: During the widely reported meeting between the SL and former president Khatami in late January, the SL told Khatami that in his opinion, Khatami should not run for President because it would not be good for the country. If Khatami chose to run and was elected, however, as directed in the Constitution, the Supreme Leader would work with him.

Mousavi To Join Race to Bolster Reformist Chances: Former PM Mir Hossein Mousavi will formally declare his candidacy; in large part to deflect some hardline pressure off former president Khatami, but also to back him up should Khatami withdraw (either voluntarily or otherwise) from the race. If Khatami survives the vetting process, then Mousavi will step aside in support of the former president.

Office of First Vice President Will Gain Increased Powers, Candidates Will Reportedly Run on President-VP Tickets: Khatami reportedly divulged IRIG plans for a change to the office of the First Vice President under the next government. Under this plan, the office will enjoy increased powers, more in line with the role of a Prime Minister or the US Vice President. Khatami has selected Moussavi as his first VP, and Karroubi has selected former Tehran Mayor Karbashi in this capacity. These duos will reportedly run on two-man tickets as in US elections. It is not clear if AN will run on a ticket with Dr. Parviz Davoudi, his first VP.

Khatami Requests USG Help to Arrange Meeting with Swiss Ambassador to Iran: To help offset IRIB's broad support for AN's candidacy, and after the IRIG blocked his two main campaign websites, Khatami is seeking outlets to raise his media profile in advance of the election. Along these lines, he has asked if Department can facilitate a meeting between Khatami and Swiss Ambassador to Tehran, Livia Agosti. Such a meeting would allow Khatami to highlight his international appeal (a key AN weakness) and Khatami welcomed media coverage of the meeting by

domestic and foreign media. Should such a meeting be possible, IRPO contact has asked that he be entrusted to deliver this message to Khatami.

13. [S/NF] Drug Interdiction Cooperation on Afghanistan as Counternarcotics - Not Political - Breakthrough: In discussions with Drug Enforcement Agency reps at ConGen Dubai, IRPO has learned that many narcotics investigations could be greatly enhanced by coordinating information sharing with Iranian counter-drug police. DEA maintains many active leads that currently end in Iran - with even minimal coordination these leads could lead to major progress in USG efforts to fight narcotrafficking in the region. Comment: Such an initiative would boost CT indirectly and help stabilize Afghanistan, by curtailing a key source of revenue for the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Beyond any bilateral political issues involved, US-Iran counternarcotics cooperation, or more accurately, incorporating Iran into regional CN programs, would likely greatly increase their effectiveness.

14. [C] Iran's Disaffected Youth So Far Tuned Out of Election: An Iranian journalist told us that the majority of Iranian youth are not likely to be politically active during the upcoming presidential campaign. Many are resigned to the fact that Khatami's candidacy, nor much else, is likely to change the current system. Most believe that Supreme Leader Khamenei will choose the next president, and therefore Iran's youth - a generation beset with unemployment, increasing repression, and isolation - have become apathetic and disaffected. He estimated about 10 to 20 percent of Iran's students are members of the Basij, but only a small percentage of them are ideologically driven. For others, Basij membership is a way to improve chances of gaining university admission or advancement. He also said that at the other extreme, the hopelessness that many young people feel is leading to dramatic increases in drug addiction and other wanton behavior. Comment: Although many pin their hopes on youthful activists to spearhead a reformist campaign, if the majority of those under 25 have consigned themselves to the status quo, then the reformists have already lost a key constituency.

15. [S/NF] Reformist journalists, bloggers under pressure: The journalist, who is coming to the U.S. to work on a U.S.-based, XXXXXXXXXXXX website, told us that the closure of Kargozaran and Hamshahri's evening edition and the arrests or interrogations of various bloggers by the IRIG has had a chilling effect among reformist newspapers. Most reform-oriented publications lack the political connections to protect themselves. The paper Etemad-e Melli is operating only because current presidential candidate and the paper's publisher Mehdi Karroubi, had the clout to resist the IRIG, he said. As a case in point, our 25-year-old interlocutor has chosen not to return to Iran while waiting to receive his U.S. visa, for fear he would not be allowed to leave the country again. Comment: The IRIG's tactics of arrest, intimidation and indirect threats, including the recent creation of a special prosecutor to deal with Internet and text message "character assassination," have had the desired effect in restraining many otherwise critical voices as a prelude to election campaigns beginning in earnest.

16. [S/NF] Speculation on Reasons Denying Visas for the U.S. Women's Badminton Team: Two IRPO contacts offered their assessments of the IRIG's decision not to issue visas to the U.S. women's badminton team earlier this month. An Iranian LES at USINT in Tehran, who was in Dubai to pick up his visa, told us that the Department's announcement of the trip and subsequent international press coverage had "politicized" the trip in the eyes of some senior Iranian officials, who saw it as a direct challenge from the U.S. that required a tough response. He recommended that future sports diplomacy programs be handled discretely, without publicity. Another contact told us that he believed that some Iranian officials had worried that the trip, already receiving positive coverage, would become a PR nightmare for Islamic Republic. Coverage of U.S. athletes being embraced by Iranian crowds, as U.S. wrestlers had been, on the

thirtieth anniversary of the Islamic Revolution was not the image the IRIG wanted to convey. Comment: Both of these explanations likely factored into the decision not to issue the visas. What is clear, however, is that the decision was made at high levels in the IRIG after a preliminary decision to issue the visas had been made.

¶17. [S/NF] Powerful Support for US-Iran Exchanges: The Iranian employee of USINT told us separately that in querying various contacts in and out of the IRIG about possible future travel of American exchange visitors to Iran, he had heard from Yasser Rafsanjani, the youngest son of Expediency Council Chair Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, that Islamic Azad University was willing to host these exchanges and to provide the necessary political cover for them. Comment: This information corroborates a separate source's information that Rafsanjani and Islamic Azad were receptive to the idea of working with USG and IRPO on various exchange and outreach programs.

¶18. (U) Window on Iran is a classified weekly product providing Washington policy community and Iran watchers highlights of key developments on Iran. It is produced by the Iran Regional Presence Office - Dubai. Please direct any questions/comments to Kay McGowan XXXXXXXXXXXX
or Charlie Pennypacker
XXXXXXXXXXXXX
ASGARD